

# The Temptations Launch New Album 'Together Again'

Motown recording artists, The Temptations, have scored a R&B Top 10 hit with their single, "Look What You Started," from the current album, *Together Again*.

This album marks the return of tenor vocalist Dennis Edwards to the group. The remaining line-up is the same since the 1982 addition of Ron Tyson with Richard Street, Melvin Franklin and Otis Williams.

This is the second Top 10 record from the popular album. The romantic "I Wonder Who She's Seeing Tonight" was a hit, as well, featuring the group's wonderful trademark harmonies.

Their new single, "Do You Wanna Go With Me," was released April 4. *Together Again* brings the group's raw '60s popular sound into an '80s direction, and will further their reputation as pop survivors.

There have been many Temptations over the years. In fact, ever since the group's inception back in 1961, some of the greatest voices in popular music have found a home in the Temptations. From the wistful, innocent falsetto of Eddie Kendricks to the emotion-charged tenor of David Ruffin to the bottom line bass of group mainstay Melvin Franklin, the Temptations have provided enjoyment and magic memories to a generation of fans.

And of all the great voices of the Temptations, none have provided more enjoyment or fonder memories than that of long time lead singer Dennis Edwards. Which is what makes the group's new album all that much more special. Edwards, a gravel-throated tenor with a raw, churchy style, dropped out of the Temptations in 1983 to pursue a solo career. In 1987, he returned to the fold. Appropriately enough, the new album is called *Together Again*.

Dennis says it's a "dream" to be back with the group. "I'm very happy he's back," adds group founder and leader Otis Williams. "He adds that identifiable sound that the public has come to expect and accept from the Tempts."

"It feels good," says Temptation Richard Street of Dennis' return to the line-up. "Once you've sung with somebody like Dennis, it's not really like he's been gone. It's a good experience to have him back and now we want to make an impression back on the recording side."

Toward that end, the Tempts have delivered one of their strongest albums of the decade in *Together Again*. It's an LP full of lush, romantic harmonies, combined with that tough, soulful edge

that has always signified the Temptations at their best. It's a vibrant and vital record—very much a creation of the '80s. Yet at the same time, it's not a trendy record that depends on a "here-today-gone-later-today" gimmick to get by. The only "gimmick" here is talent. And as Tempt Ron Tyson notes, that's the only gimmick the Temptations need.



The Temptations

"We're trying to maintain the roots of the Temptations; singing and harmony, rather than trying to venture out into other areas where all these people are experimenting with computers and that stuff. The Temptations are trendsetters, so it's not necessary that they follow the trend."

Indeed. Especially since so much of the music industry, knowingly or unknowingly, is still following the Temptations. Years ago, the *Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll* put it best: "The Temptations quite simply stood as the finest vocal group in Sixties soul; they could out-dress, out-dance and out-sing any competition in sight."

And as flattering as that observation is, even it fails to tell the whole story. The early Temptations — David Ruffin, Eddie Kendricks, Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin and the late Paul Williams—gathered up the influences of numerous do-wop groups before them, then synthesized and updated them in hits like "My Girl," "Ain't Too Proud To Beg," "Get Ready" and "I Wish It

Would Rain." In the process, they not only helped to define the Motown Sound, but they also provided inspiration and a role model for any number of singers and groups that came to fame after them.

Everyone from Hall and Oates to the New Edition to Michael Jackson owes a bit of their style to the Temptations. The Tempts were one of the first groups to spotlight not one, not two, but three capable lead voices—sometimes all in the course of the same song. They were among the few black acts with the wide ranging versatility to go from R&B and Pop to Broadway standards, an ability showcased to breathtaking perfection on the classic *In A Mellow Mood* album of 1967.

All of which has made that early Temptations group quite legendary among music aficionados—and has left subsequent line-ups with a larger-than-life heritage to live up to. Every one of those line-ups has managed to do just that. To their credit, many of them have even managed to add to and enlarge the Tempts' reputation for innovation.

For instance, when Dennis Edwards first came aboard in 1968, he helped to lead the group into the then-uncharted realm of "psychedelic soul" with such landmark performances as "Cloud Nine" (Motown's first Grammy winner) and "Can't Get Next To You." After Damon Harris and Richard Street joined in 1972, the Tempts pioneered a tough, street level urban blues with hits like "Masterpiece" and "Papa Was A Rolling Stone" (two more Grammy winners). In 1982, Ruffin and Kendricks staged a brief *Reunion* with the group and the result

was a steaming slab of funk called "Standing On The Top." Just two years later, with Ali Ollie Woodson in the lead, the Tempts wedded timeless harmony with '80s techno-pop and came up

an institution the Tempts are always there—always reliable. But perhaps in a larger sense, the word does the group a disservice. When you think of institutions, you think of cold grey buildings and stodgy old men who've done the same things for so long you half expect to see cobwebs growing from their noses. You don't always think of an institution as changing and growing.

By contrast, better than 25 years after the day they took the name, the Temptations are still restless, still moving, still standing on the horizon. Ron Tyson, Richard Street, Melvin Franklin, Otis Williams and Dennis Edwards are the Temptations — charging into the '90s, *Together Again*.

## SUMMER FUN PROGRAM AT DOOLITTLE CENTER

The Doolittle Community Center, 1901 North "J" St., will be one of the many sites participating in the Summer Fun Program being sponsored by the City of Las Vegas Department of Parks, Recreation and Senior Citizen Activities.

Beginning June 13 and running through Aug. 4 a full line-up of activities are planned from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

The cost of the Summer Fun Program is \$35 per person or \$45 per family for the entire session. For more information call the Doolittle Community Center at 386-6374.

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